

CLAIMS

We Claim:

1. A system adapted for pushing apart cortical bone surfaces comprising

an expandable body having a collapsed configuration for insertion into a space defined between cortical bone surfaces, the expandable body capable of being expanded in response to interior fluid pressure, and

a passage communicating with the expandable body and with a source of fluid to convey fluid to cause expansion of the expandable body within the space, thereby pushing apart the cortical bone surfaces.

2. A system according to claim 1 and further including a catheter tube having a distal end, and

wherein the expandable body is carried by the distal end of the catheter tube.

3. A system according to claim 2 wherein the passage comprises a lumen in the catheter tube.

4. A system according to claim 2 and further including a cannula to guide the catheter tube toward the space.

5. A system according to claim 1 wherein the body includes an essentially non-elastic material.

6. A system according to claim 1 wherein the body includes an essentially semi-elastic material.

7. A system according to claim 1 wherein the body includes an essentially elastic material.

8. A system according to claim 1

wherein the body include including material that limits expansion of the body.

9. A system according to claim 1 and further including

5 a second expandable body having a collapsed configuration for insertion into the space with the first defined expandable body, the second expandable body also being capable of expansion in response to interior fluid pressure, and

10 a passage communicating with the second expandable body and with a source of fluid to convey fluid to cause expansion of the second expandable body within the space, whereby the first and second expandable bodies push apart the cortical bone surfaces.

10. A method for pushing apart cortical bone surfaces comprising the steps of

5 inserting an expandable body in a collapsed condition into a space defined between cortical bone surfaces, and

expanding the expandable body within the space to push apart the cortical bone surfaces.

11. A method according to claim 10

and further including the step of inserting a second expandable body in a collapsed condition into the space, and

5 expanding the first and second expandable bodies within the space to push apart the cortical bone surfaces.

12. A method for pushing apart adjacent vertebral bodies comprising the steps of

5 inserting an expandable body in a collapsed condition into an intervertebral space defined between adjacent vertebral bodies, and

expanding the expandable body within the

40010576-11301

intervertebral space to push apart the adjacent vertebral bodies.

13. A method according to claim 12
and further including the step of inserting
a second expandable body in a collapsed condition
into the intervertebral space, and

5 expanding the first and second expandable
bodies within the intervertebral space to push apart
the adjacent vertebral bodies.

14. A method for reducing a fracture
between cortical bone surfaces comprising the steps
of

5 inserting an expandable body in a collapsed
condition into the fracture, and

expanding the expandable body within the
fracture to push apart the cortical bone surfaces.

15. A method according to claim 14
and further including the step of inserting
a second expandable body in a collapsed condition
into the fracture, and

5 expanding the first and second expandable
bodies within the fracture to push apart the
cortical bone surfaces.

10040576.1304